

Traumatic Amputation QUERI Workshop

Setting the Agenda for Evidence Based Best Practices and Quality Improvement Efforts May 19-20, 2004 Hamilton Crowne Plaza Hotel Washington, DC

Optimizing medical care for the combat amputee is a complex task. To date, Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) and Brookes Army Medical Center have cared for more than 120 soldiers, sailors, and airmen who have sustained a major limb amputation during Operation Iraqi Freedom Enduring Freedom (OIFEF).

Kevlar vests have been shown to protect the torso and major internal organs. Together with improvements in field medicine and rapid evacuation procedures, soldiers are surviving injuries that proved fatal in previous wars. Despite these advances, many casualties continue to return with severe extremity wounds; frequently, amputation is necessary. Several amputees have lost more than one limb, experience permanent damage to residual limbs, and experience permanent damage to remaining limbs.

VA is dedicated to providing optimal care for traumatic amputees, including appropriate clinical interventions, technology, and follow-up care throughout their lives. Achievement of this goal requires coordinated efforts to develop, identify, and assure the use of optimal, evidence-based care practices, ranging from basic scientific research to discover new and better clinical treatments, to health services research efforts to measure current clinical practices and to develop and implement innovative care delivery and quality improvement programs to address gaps in current practices. VA clinicians and scientists with skills from the full range of medical and health care research disciplines will be encouraged to develop – and implement – cutting-edge medical interventions, rehabilitation techniques, and assistive technology that exceed our present expectations, fully restore function, and provide the amputee with a feeling of being “made whole.”

As an early step in this process, VA’s Health Services Research and Development Service (HSR&D) and Rehabilitation Research and Development Service (RR&D) are collaborating to:

- facilitate the conduct of needed research, and to
- enhance the quality and outcomes of VA amputee healthcare by systematically implementing relevant research findings and evidence-based clinical practices into routine use within VA.

The VA Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) will provide a framework for key components of this work. QUERI works to identify important clinical priorities and outcomes, assess current clinical practices and gaps in current quality and outcomes of care, and develops programs to improve quality through implementation of evidence-based practices. This Traumatic Amputation QUERI Workshop will bring together clinical rehabilitation experts and QUERI health services research experts to share knowledge and information about amputation

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practices, outcomes, and quality and to begin formulating plans for ongoing quality improvement efforts. Through a series of plenary and working group sessions, participants will summarize current research and knowledge regarding current VA clinical practices and will identify research and knowledge gaps regarding health care for traumatic amputees. Education about the QUERI process will be provided and participants will begin to apply this process to amputation-related issues. Sessions and working groups will focus on specific issues such as access to care, prescriptions for prostheses, prosthesis fitting, rehabilitation, and secondary issues (comorbidities, complications, and psychosocial issues).

At the conclusion of the workshop, attendees should be better able to develop detailed plans for research and quality improvement projects designed to improve VA care for traumatic amputees.